

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1           1.     An image forming device comprising:  
2           an image engine configured to form hard images;  
3           an environmental sensor configured to monitor at least one environmental  
4     condition proximate to the image forming device and to provide data indicative of  
5     the at least one environmental condition; and  
6           an interface configured to communicate the data indicative of the at least  
7     one environmental condition externally of the image forming device.

1           2.     The device of claim 1 wherein the image engine is configured to  
2     use a consumable to form the hard images, and the interface comprises a memory  
3     of the consumable.

1           3.     The device of claim 1 wherein the interface comprises a  
2     communications interface adapted to communicate with devices external of the  
3     image forming device.

1           4.     The device of claim 1 further comprising processing circuitry  
2     configured as an embedded web server and configured to communicate the data  
3     with respect to a client device external of the image forming device.

1           5.     The device of claim 1 further comprising:  
2           a memory; and  
3           processing circuitry configured to control storage of the data using the  
4     memory to provide a history of the environmental conditions to which the image  
forming device has been exposed.

1           6.     The device of claim 5 wherein the processing circuitry is  
2     configured to control the storage of the data at a predetermined moment in time.

7. The device of claim 5 wherein the processing circuitry is configured to monitor the data and to control the storage of the data responsive to the monitoring.

8. The device of claim 1 further comprising an internal power source configured to provide power to the sensor in an absence of power from a source external of the image forming device.

9. The device of claim 1 wherein the environmental sensor is configured to monitor the at least one environmental condition comprising a plurality of environmental conditions proximate to the image forming device and comprising humidity and temperature.

10. The device of claim 1 wherein the image engine comprises a print engine of the image forming device embodied as a printer.

11. A method of operating an image forming device, the method comprising:  
providing an image forming device configured to form hard images;  
sensing at least one environmental condition of an environment proximate to the image forming device; and  
communicating data regarding the at least one environmental condition externally of the image forming device.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the providing comprises providing the image forming device configured to use a consumable to form hard images, and the communicating comprises storing the data regarding the at least one environmental condition using the consumable.

1           13. The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a request  
2 within the image forming device from a source external of the image forming  
3 device, and the communicating comprises communicating responsive to the  
4 receiving.

1           14. The method of claim 11 wherein the sensing comprises sensing  
2 a plurality of environmental conditions comprising temperature and humidity.

1           15. The method of claim 11 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device embodied as a printer.

1           16. A method of monitoring an environment proximate to an image  
2 forming device configured to form hard images, the method comprising:  
3 providing an image forming device configured to form hard images and  
4 to monitor at least one environmental condition proximate to the image forming  
5 device and to communicate data regarding the at least one environmental condition  
6 externally of the image forming device; and  
7 receiving the data regarding the at least one environmental condition  
8 from the image forming device.

1           17. The method of claim 16 further comprising analyzing the data  
2 regarding the at least one environmental condition after the receiving to determine  
3 a quantitative parameter for the at least one environmental condition for testing  
4 other image forming devices.

1           18. The method of claim 16 further comprising communicating a  
2 request to the image forming device, and wherein the communicating the data is  
3 responsive to the communicating the request.

1           19. The method of claim 16 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device configured to use a consumable, and wherein the  
3 receiving the data comprises extracting the data from the consumable.

1           20. The method of claim 16 wherein the providing comprises providing  
2 the image forming device configured to monitor the at least one environmental  
3 condition comprising a plurality of environmental conditions comprising temperature  
4 and humidity.

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